

How Does the 7-year, \$175 million Contract for Felix Hernandez Rate All-Time?

Written by Maury Brown
Thursday, 07 February 2013 15:55



He's call him the "King" and now he's getting paid like one.

Today, the Seattle Mariners reached an agreement with former AL Cy Young winner Felix Hernandez to a 7-year, \$175 million contract. In doing so he becomes the highest-paid pitcher in baseball. According to Bob Nightengale of USA Today, the deal is expected to be finalized before Spring Training. As [reported by Nightengale](#) :

Hernandez was scheduled to earn \$19.5 million in 2013 and \$20 million in '14. Instead, his new contract will take effect this season and pay him a record average annual value of \$25 million through 2019.

So, how does the contract rate against his current and former peers?

By average annual value (AAV) he ranks #4 tied with Ryan Howard and Josh Hamilton at \$25 million, and surpasses the Dodgers' Zack Grienke who's AAV for his 2013-18 deal is \$24.5 million as the highest AAV for a starting pitcher.

As mentioned, in terms of total dollars he surpasses CC Sabathia's 7-year, \$161 million deal that runs 2009-15 as the highest paid pitcher. He ranks #9 overall below Mark Teixeira of the Yankees who has a 8-year, \$180 million deal that runs 2009-16.

And while the total dollars are nothing to sneeze at, the contract length is fraught with risk. The

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7-year deal ties him with Sabathia, and Kevin Brown's deal in 1998 for \$105 million with the Dodgers as some of the longest in MLB history for a starting pitcher. Only the 8-year, \$121 million contract that Mike Hampton reached with the Colorado Rockies in 2000 ranks longer for an active player. Prior to the 1977 season, Wayne Garland signed a 10-year, \$2.3 million deal with the Cleveland Indians. He retired after the 1981 season and Garland never played through the entire contract length.

Hernandez is now 26, turning 27 on April 8. By the time the contract expires in 2019 he will be 33 years old.

And while the deal looks extraordinary now, just wait... Justin Verlander is waiting in the wings and is more than likely to top Hernandez sometime soon.



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